

724 CLAY AVENUE (Commercial)  
Jeannette  
Westmoreland County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6108

HABS  
PA  
65-JEAN,  
49-

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
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ADDENDUM TO:  
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### 724 CLAY AVENUE (COMMERCIAL)

HABS No. PA-6108

**LOCATION:** 724 Clay Avenue, Jeannette, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

**SIGNIFICANCE:** A high concentration of window, tableware, bottle and specialty glass plants distinguished Jeannette as “The Glass City” early in its history. Significant housing stock consists of company-built row and detached double houses, and several privately constructed dwellings.

#### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Although this lot was one of the first sold by McKee in December 1888, four months before the area was added to the city, it was one of the last to have a permanent brick structure. A small two-story frame building appears on the 1891 map, but it was gone by 1895. Through three subsequent changes of ownership, the property remained vacant. Greensburg resident Frank Lombardo bought the land in 1907 for \$1250 and was first assessed for a “three story brick house” on the lot in 1910. The Lombardo family lost the building in 1920 due to bankruptcy, and the trustee sold the property to local cobbler Solomon Gross and his daughter Ray Hodes (see 211 South Seventh Street, HABS No. PA-6139). Solomon Gross moved his shoe repair business into the building after 1923, and during the 1930s and 1940s, Ben Gross (Solomon’s son) operated a highly successful restaurant specializing in seafood here. Part of the painted sign is still evident on the Eighth Street side of the building. The restaurant was later moved to a site along Highway 30 in Irwin. Solomon Gross’s children and their heirs owned the property until the early 1970s.

Residents here included the Lombardo family when they owned the building. Frank Lombardo was a section foreman, probably with the Pennsylvania Railroad. Two other family members, Gabriel, a glassworker, and Joseph, a laborer, lived here as well. Living along with the Lombardos in 1913 was Laura Ressler, who ran a boarding house in the building, and five other single people, mainly laborers and glass workers. In the late 1920s, residents included part-owner Rachel Hodes and her husband Samuel (see 618 Clay Avenue, HABS No. PA-6105) and other tenants. Two couples with heads of households employed at two of the local glass works are listed as tenants in the 1948 directory.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

This narrow block of flats with a storefront on the first floor now anchors the west end of the commercial buildings on Jeannette's Clay Avenue. Built between 1909-1910, the three bay by nine bay structure shows more restrained detailing than the earlier Victorian buildings further east. The brick veneer facades are complemented with finished stone sills and lintels, a corbelled brick cornice and pointed stone corner accents. The rear façade has wood porches on all three levels with brick or wood columns and wood railings. All of the first floor and basement window openings along Eighth Street and the storefront along Clay have been in-filled with brick.

## PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

*Insurance Maps of Jeannette, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.* New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1891, 1910, 1916, 1925.

Deed Books. Recorder of Deeds, Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg, Pennsylvania, 168/109, 263/192, 305/498, 330/53, 443/450, 443/548, 647/104, 650/496, 655/10, 655/390, 702/470, 1521/186, 1526/145, 2002/184, 2063/784, 2105/105, 2140/861, 2241/961.

City Directories, 1897, 1913, 1923, 1928, 1948, 1960.

Interview, Joseph and Esther (Gross) Glatsky, Lynda Wood, residents 211 South Seventh Street and their daughter, August 7, 1990.

## PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

In February 1987, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) began a multi-year historical and architectural documentation project in southwestern Pennsylvania. Carried out in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), HABS and HAER undertook a comprehensive documentation of Jeannette, documenting industries, housing and cultural institutions.